CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.672
24 February 1994

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 24 February 1994, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Wolfgang Hoffmann (Germany)

GE.94-60457 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 672nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the beginning of my presidency I feel very comfortable to state that all the CD's ad hoc committees and their respective sub-bodies are established and have started working. The special coordinators for the question of the issue of the prohibition of the production of fissile material, for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices (the "cut-off" coordinator) and the modernization of the agenda are nominated. The prompt and smooth start of this year's session is a promising sign that the Conference on Disarmament does live up to the challenges we have to tackle this year. I will elaborate on that later on.

The merit of the smooth resuming of this Conference's work goes to my predecessor, my esteemed colleague Ambassador Errera of France. In his customary subtle and inventive manner he succeeded in settling the Conference on its tracks at a crucial stage. This did not go without saying. It took a lot of patient work of consultations and - at the right moment - friendly pressure. Apart from his diplomatic skills, the former President, Ambassador Errera, succeeded because he was respected as a true mediator solely dedicated to the common goal of preserving and enhancing the unique role of the CD as a negotiating body.

We set ourselves ambitious goals and we rightly did so. We have started serious work on a comprehensive test-ban treaty and I am impressed by the manifest will of participants in the negotiations to make rapid progress. Consultations have begun to determine the role of the CD in the area of the cut-off that might lead to negotiations on a treaty prohibiting the production of certain fissile material. The Ad Hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-nuclear-weapon States against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons will hopefully be able to make decisive progress in accordance with its mandate. The Conference on Disarmament is the natural forum for the negotiation of all these treaties.

This year's agenda of the Conference on Disarmament coincides with the objectives my Government has long been advocating. I have already made it clear in previous sessions that my delegation wishes to contribute to successful and constructive negotiations on the issues aforementioned. It is along this line of thinking that I accepted with great pleasure the chairmanship of the NTB Ad Hoc Committee's Working Group on Verification. However, it is for the same reason that I eventually had to give up the chairmanship of the NSA Ad Hoc Committee you originally entrusted me with. The questions relating to negative security assurances are also a very important issue and should not be dismissed as a second-ranking question. They should be dealt with the full attention of a chairman not committed to other functions within the CD. That is why I can only welcome my esteemed colleague Ambassador Guillaume as the new Chairman of the NSA Ad Hoc Committee. It is a matter of course that my delegation will try to assist him in his endeavour to find an agreement on this very crucial issue.

(The President)

Unfortunately the picture I have painted of the Conference on Disarmament is too idyllic to be totally true. We have failed so far to solve the painful problem of the extension of membership. I think everybody will subscribe to the objective that we have to extend the CD's membership soon if the CD really wants to comply with the role of a universal negotiating body. This is particularly evident in view of the forthcoming negotiation of a CTBT. I understand the mounting frustration and anger of States who in vain have been applying for membership for years. The actual deadlock is by no means the failure of my predecessors, Ambassador Errera and Ambassador Zahran, quite the contrary. They went out of their way to find any conceivable solution. I only can pursue their efforts and I will do my very best in my presidency to explore any avenue of a possible solution to this deadlock. In this context I want to associate myself with the wish the outgoing President addressed to this plenary on 17 February 1994 in his closing remarks saying that all of us have to take our responsibility soon and should do so in due respect of the candidate States. We should bear in mind that the future of the Conference on Disarmament is at stake.

I hope I can contribute to the performance of the Conference on Disarmament and I am glad I can count on the help and assistance of the secretariat, in particular Mr. Bensmail and his staff.

I intend first of all to give the floor to the delegations inscribed on the list of speakers for today, and thereafter I propose to take up the requests for participation in the work of the Conference from the following non-member States: Ecuador and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

I have on the list of speakers for today the representatives of Australia, the Netherlands and Canada. As you are aware, this will be the last plenary meeting at which Ambassador Paul O'Sullivan of Australia will be present among us, since he has been recalled to his capital to take up new and important functions. I hardly need stress the importance of the contribution that Ambassador O'Sullivan has made to the work of our Conference. I am sure you will all remember and appreciate the very active and effective role he played on behalf of his Government in moving the process of negotiation which led to the conclusion of the chemical weapons Convention. In fact, the tabling of the Australian draft convention at an important political time was perhaps a turning-point in our common efforts to finalize a text acceptable to all. Moreover, in the very final stage of these negotiations, Ambassador O'Sullivan played a crucial role in developing consensus on two vital articles of the Convention. More recently, Ambassador O'Sullivan was entrusted with the very difficult and delicate task of conducting consultations on the expansion of membership of the Conference, and I am sure you will all agree with me that the dynamic and imaginative way in which he discharged this task will be remembered by all of us. Of course, our best parting gift to him would have been an agreement on expansion, but I am confident that his legacy will continue to be a tribute to his diplomatic skills and determination. I know I speak on behalf of all of you when I extend to Ambassador O'Sullivan and his wife Merrilyn our very best wishes for their future happiness and success in Australia.

(The President)

I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador O'Sullivan.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (Australia): Mr. President, I am a little bit intimidated by your introduction, and I might say that I am also intimidated by the practice which grew up under your predecessor of having some opening words in the language of the President of the Conference. Since my German is even worse than my French, I hope you will forgive me for not saying something to you in your own language. Perhaps before I begin my statement, I might also recall in that context that there was once in this room, 60 years ago, an Australian representative to the League of Nations, Sir Ryire Granville, who was an earnest farmer from the wheatfields of New South Wales who was made High Commissioner in London and came here to be our representative at the League's deliberations; and in those days it was considered not only elegant but also necessary to speak in French. I do not know exactly what French training he had had, but at the time the French representative in the Conference at the League of Nations was Monsieur Briand, who later went on to be French Foreign Minister and then Prime Minister, and there is a famous scene in one of our archives that describes Monsieur Briand's reaction of uncontrolled laughter with tears pouring down his cheeks as Sir Ryire Granville addressed the Conference in French. For this reason, you will excuse me if I proceed in English.

Mr. President, let me congratulate you on your assumption of duties as the leader of this Conference and assure you of the full support of my delegation. I would like to welcome our new colleagues, Ambassador Meghlaoui of Algeria, Ambassador Sánchez Arnau of Argentina, Ambassador Omar of Ethiopia, Ambassador Vattani of Italy and Ambassador Murzi of Venezuela and to join in the expressions of good wishes to those who have recently concluded their assignments here.

Since in all probability this will be the last time I will have the honour to address the Conference, I would like to make some general observations about the work we are engaged in here.

A major factor in influencing what is possible now in the Conference on Disarmament is the way the disappearance of cold war certainties plays out in a negotiating context. In the period of the cold war, security (via the accumulation of military assets) was seen as tantamount to stability. By contrast constant change is a major characteristic of many politico-military relationships now. And the pace of change is likely to intensify over time because in a multipolar world, nations will make more varied calculations about how to advance their security interests. In thinking about how to achieve and maintain security in completely new circumstances, many questions arise about the extent to which standing armies, large nuclear stockpiles and their delivery systems or even rapidly deployable forces can address contemporary security problems in the disorderly post-cold-war scene.

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As well as constant change it is obvious that, for much of the world, violence and confusion have accompanied the ending of the cold war because of the end of the stabilizing bipolar hegemony and of the release of various ethnic, political, religious and economic grievances.

The Conference on Disarmament, like many other aspects of international life, has been released from the cold war constraints and, for the first time, can get down to its task of negotiating arms control and disarmament agreements. It has managed to deal with one category of weapons of mass destruction, the Convention banning chemical weapons, and is now turning its attention to two others: the ban on testing nuclear devices and the ban on production of fissile material for making nuclear weapons. Beyond these particular matters there are other items of interest on the CD's agenda: finding a binding legal instrument to give security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States that they will not be threatened or attacked with nuclear weapons; and efforts to get some sort of handle on the unrestrained and massive flows of conventional arms.

Thus the CD is well placed to address the problems of the spread of nuclear and other weapons by contributing legal agreements that shore up the existing non-proliferation regime and that create norms of international behaviour. No treaty, of course, can guarantee political choices especially by desperate and isolated States. But in general the opportunities for negotiated disarmament agreements, firmly focused on reinforcing security at lower levels of armaments, are now better than at any time in recent history.

In addition to the achievement of an indefinite ban on testing nuclear devices and contributing to an indefinite extension of the NPT, the Conference on Disarmament should have a role in the near term in making the biological weapons Convention an effective instrument by adding a verification regime and in negotiating an agreement (or at least guidelines) on reducing the flows of conventional arms. Seeking such an agreement now, or perhaps guidelines, may be propitious, as the world conventional arms sales market has been in decline since the late 1980s. A combination of supplier restraint on transfers of the most potent weapons with recipient restraint and increased transparency reflected in an expansion of the existing Register of Conventional Arms would be a very positive development. Such a cooperative relationship between suppliers and recipients would reflect the model embodied in, for instance, the chemical weapons Convention. In a related area, an expansion of the inhumane weapons Convention to cover, at least, non-self-disabling land-mines would be a very welcome humanitarian development and a useful boost towards conventional arms control.

There are two other areas of particular interest for Australia in the current arms control agenda: limits on the delivery systems for ballistic missiles and use of the environment as a weapon. Concerning delivery systems, the Missile Technology Control Regime offers short-term and limited-category supplier restraints. But it needs to be underpinned by a global agreement which creates norms adopted by the whole relevant international community. The CD's Ad Hoc Committee on outer space offers a forum for confidence-building measures (such as advance notification of space launches and

(Mr. O'Sullivan, Australia)

inspection of payloads) and for the globalization of existing measures (such as the INF treaties). It may also be a suitable forum for the compilation of regional or subregional understandings on restraint on (or even foreswearing of acquisition of) advanced delivery systems.

The use of oil spills and the deliberate firing of oil wells by Iraq in the Gulf war illustrates that deliberately induced devastation on a grand scale is a real issue. Australia's vastness and varied climate and meteorological conditions lead naturally to our interest in the operations of the ENMOD Convention. We would join actively in the search to make its prohibitions clearer and more comprehensive.

The future arms control and disarmament agenda will require the elimination of cold war assumptions, the construction of a common approach to security on a basis of shared or highly congruent interests, and the search for mutually acceptable arrangements that break out of the typical cold war cycle of perceived threat and counter-reaction. Much of this activity will necessarily be on a regional or bilateral basis, but those regional arrangements are likely to build on norms and mechanisms set out in global agreements. In some cases such as a CTBT and other weapons of mass destruction, it seems likely that regional progress can only be achieved through a global resolution of the issue. The CTBT negotiations, even more than the CWC, have the potential to break out of East/West and North/South mindsets.

In order to fulfil its responsibilities, this Conference needs to refurbish itself by expanding its membership. The proposal I made on 2 September last year was based on several commonly agreed assumptions: that this would remain a body whose function was to negotiate arms control and disarmament agreements and where the rule of consensus would apply, and that therefore it should be of limited composition and that it should reflect the various political, economic and geographical elements commonly accepted in the international system. In discussing this approach with member States, it also became clear that an attempt to reconstruct the Conference by fundamentally altering its underlying balances was not what members wanted. Proposals for a very small expansion, or more recent ideas to add a small number to the list might not be capable of acceptance because they would not permit the maintenance of those underlying geographical, political and economic balances.

A key question in view of the statements made in plenary on 2 September 1993 and 10 February 1994 is whether any expansion is possible that does not include Iraq and Israel. I believe the answer is no. If this is so the key to expansion is a reversal of the existing barrier to the adoption of the package presented on 2 September 1993 or any subsequent agreed approach. To do this it is necessary to avoid importing artificial criteria that have nothing to do with the work of the CD, and to eschew linkage with considerations that take place in other bodies. In the matter of its own composition above all else, the CD should be the master of its own decision. If we want a reasonably near-term result, I believe a determined approach along these lines is necessary.

(Mr. O'Sullivan, Australia)

Finally, I would like to thank the Secretary-General, the deputy Secretary-General and members of the secretariat, the interpreters and other staff for their courtesy and efficiency. They have been of great assistance to me and my delegation.

As I leave the Conference after slightly more than three years' accreditation here, I would like to emphasize how much the Conference depends on a spirit of tolerance, civility and mutual respect. I would like to thank all my colleagues for their cooperation and support. I was lucky enough to be present when the Conference moved into a productive phase, and I look forward to hearing of its future accomplishments.

The PRESIDENT: I will not expose you to my French, and as German, which I speak rather fluently, is not a United Nations language, I will just say privately to you Danke sehr and I would like to thank you for your important statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Wagenmakers.

Mr. WAGENMAKERS (Netherlands): Congratulations to you, Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffman, on the assumption of your duties as President of the Conference on Disarmament. The commitment of Germany to play its full part in the execution of the arms control and disarmament agenda of the 1990s is well known. I am sure that under your able leadership the CD will make tangible progress on the important issues of this year's business. I particularly hope that we can contribute successfully and practically to the enhancement of transparency in armaments, the issue I will address today. I thank Ambassador Errera of France for the spirited and determined way in which he guided and directed us during the starting phase of the 1994 CD session. Having listened to Ambassador O'Sullivan's peroration, I would like to pay tribute to the quality of the participation, the invariably high quality of our friends "down under". Specifically, I thank Paul O'Sullivan for his creative and dynamic contributions to our work and for his friendship. The Netherlands delegation wishes him well.

In my declaration of 27 January last, I gave the Netherlands' overall assessment of the first year of implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, entitled "Transparency in armaments". Today, I would like to dwell in some detail on the complementarity of the responsibilities entrusted to the United Nations Secretary-General and the Conference on Disarmament.

The Transparency in Armaments process faces an important year. In October 1993, for the first time, a United Nations Secretary-General's consolidated report on transparency in armaments (A/48/344) appeared. Together with its supplements, this report lists returns for calendar year 1992 submitted by 83 Member States to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. This was a promising start, especially because all major arms suppliers reported and because a significant part, some 90 per cent, of the total number of inter-State arms transfers for the calendar year 1992 was covered.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

As for the second consolidated United Nations Secretary-General's report, which will contain returns pertaining to the calendar year 1993, more nations should participate to make the Register truly universal. All United Nations Member States are urged to report their imports and exports in 1993 of arms covered by the seven categories of the Register to the United Nations Secretary-General by 30 April 1994. If individual States have no imports or exports of arms to report, it is nevertheless important to file a "nil return" with the United Nations Secretary-General. All "nil return" is indicative of a nation's willingness to participate in the transparency drive. Submission of a "nil return" is an important political gesture.

The transparency process stands to benefit only if more than the roughly 30 States that have hitherto done so were to provide background information for the Register. Background information should relate to military holdings and procurement through national production, preferably covering the seven categories for arms transfers and following the model of the standardized reporting form used for transfers. Background information should further explain policies concerning arms transfers, and export policies, legislation and administrative procedures regarding the authorization of arms transfers and the prevention of illicit transfers.

Allow me to draw the attention of this Conference to the fact that, also in 1994, a Group of Governmental Experts established by the United Nations Secretary-General under paragraph 11 (b) of United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, has to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development. With a view to enabling that New York Group to base its findings also on the returns by Member States over calendar year 1993, the above-mentioned deadline - 30 April 1994 - for those returns by Member States to the United Nations Register becomes all the more important.

A few words on the work of the 1994 Group of Governmental Experts. First, the mandate of the Group expects them to review the results of the Register in terms of ensuring its continuing operation. This means that the universal and non-discriminatory basis of the Register should be secured and that its overall objective be served. The objective is to enhance transparency, without prejudice to the security of Member States, and to help avoid destabilizing accumulations of arms. To that end the Group of Governmental Experts might recommend some slight procedural fixes to be applied to the standardized reporting form as well as some adjustments to existing categories.

The second task of the expert Group is to formulate recommendations on the further development of the Register. This concerns the possible addition of categories of equipment and expansion of the scope of the Register, for instance by including data on military holdings and procurement through national production. Follow-up action of the United Nations General Assembly on such recommendations will determine the Register's shape and impact for the foreseeable future. A recommendation for using the Register as an instrument for regional consultation and cooperation is another possibility to be considered.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

Also here in Geneva, 1994 will be an important year for transparency in armaments. The Conference on Disarmament has devoted the last two years to the necessary and fruitful exploration of this new subject. Specifically in 1993 CD delegations have invested in transparency in armaments by indicating national positions, and submitting working papers and practical proposals on the issue. This year we should try to turn these investments to profit by formulating concrete proposals for increasing openness and transparency in armaments. Such proposals will contribute to building confidence and trust among States and, consequently, will create greater stability, worldwide and regional.

The work of the CD is of direct relevance to the overall transparency process. The CD's responsibility for openness and transparency is neither restricted in time nor in place. The work of the CD is a continuous part of a "family of efforts". Work in Geneva and in New York is complementary: United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/36 L provides for specific responsibilities of the Register on the one hand and of the Conference on Disarmament on the other. While, at least initially, the purpose of the Register is to increase openness and transparency in relation to conventional arms transfers, the CD has a wider, more general task.

The CD will fulfil its responsibility properly only if, under the rubric transparency, it designs and develops measures aimed at reducing and, hopefully, preventing aggravation of conflict situations. The CD should also provide inputs of practical use to the United Nations Register. Indeed, operative paragraph 11 (b) of resolution 46/36 L explicitly mentions that the 1994 Group of Governmental Experts should operate "taking into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament as set forth in paragraphs 12 to 15". In conformity with the global responsibility of the CD for openness and transparency it should be stressed that the application of measures designed and developed here can be both worldwide and regional.

In this respect I may be permitted to dwell for a moment on such measures as applied in my own region. The record of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) speaks for itself. The Stockholm CSBM Document of 1986 has been gradually expanded over the years. The present Vienna Document 1992 contains a wide range of confidence-building measures: an annual exchange of information on military organization, manpower and major weapons and equipment systems; the possibility of verifying that information during evaluation visits; a consultation mechanism for unusual military activities; a programme of visits (to air bases) and military contacts; and a communications system for speedy notifications between Foreign Ministries. At present negotiations about the further development of the Vienna Document continue.

The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the CFE Treaty, has also increased openness tremendously. In the Treaty ceilings on heavy weaponry (much like the first five categories of the United Nations Arms Register) have been agreed upon. These ceilings must be reached in November 1995, after a three-year reduction period, the first one having

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transpired some time ago. After the first reduction year 17,000 pieces of equipment have been destroyed or converted. More than 1,000 on-site inspections have taken place, among them quite a number of challenge inspections. I can assure you that this large number of inspections contributes considerably to transparency in disarmament.

Numbers and technical data are important, particularly in the framework of the Register. The arms control measures we are supposed to elaborate here in the CD pertain to major weapons platforms, categories of weapons with a proven suitability for cross-border offensive actions, and not to small fry. These systems are relatively easy to identify, define, record and monitor. The elaboration by the CD of practical means to enhance openness and transparency does not need to be a technical and specialist operation. Our task is political. We are not here to excel in mathematics or statistics. Excruciating efforts to define precisely holdings, transfers and equipment will not fulfil our objectives. What we have to elaborate are practical, down-to-earth measures and designs that help neighbours to start trusting each other. Political commitment is a conditio sine qua non in building confidence and increasing stability.

What then are the practical consequences of the CD's responsibility pertaining to transparency in armaments for the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on transparency during this year's CD session? The Netherlands delegation would like to offer a number of concrete suggestions.

The CD's Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments should enable the 1994 New York Group of Governmental Experts to take into account, inter alia, the work of the CD in preparing its report to the forty-ninth United Nations General Assembly, according to operative paragraph 11 (b) of resolution 46/36 L. At its first session the United Nations Secretary-General's Group as a whole felt that they should have sound knowledge of the CD's work on the issue. The Group therefore urged its Chairman to write to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments to draw the latter's attention to this CD responsibility, which has important consequences for the Ad Hoc Committee's work this year. The input of the CD would give a useful dimension to the work of the Group in New York. Specifically, views of the CD on practical means to increase openness and transparency related to excessive and destabilizing accumulations of arms, military holdings and procurement through national production will be of direct relevance to both the Group and the Register. Consequently, at its second session, starting 31 May 1994, the New York Group should have at its disposal some reflection of the CD's work on transparency in armaments.

In view of the request for a CD contribution, initiated and supported by the whole Group of Governmental Experts, it is regrettable that no consensus has yet been achieved here on the draft work programme of the CD's Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments. For me it is hard to conceive how between delegations of one and the same Member State opinions on the same issue can differ so much across the ocean.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

As far as the CD's responsibility in the wider framework of transparency in armaments is concerned, my concrete suggestions for action are largely based on existing proposals, submitted to the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments in 1993. The CD should elaborate these proposals with a view to developing confidence-building measures. As was put forward by the Ad Hoc Committee's Chairman, Ambassador György Boytha, new proposals are of course to be encouraged.

In the conventional field the following subjects for confidence-building measures present themselves: declarations on the size and organization of armed forces (a British proposal); declarations on the closure or conversion of military production facilities (an Italian proposal); international data exchange of military holdings and procurement through national production (a United States proposal); complementary regional measures to enhance transparency in armaments (a Japanese proposal); and a code of conduct, a Polish suggestion, yet to be elaborated. Similar ideas were brought to the fore by Ireland, New Zealand and Romania to bring about voluntary restraint and responsibility in conventional arms transfers.

The CD's Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments can certainly do useful work on the acute problem posed by the present-day use of anti-personnel land-mines. This question has both political and humanitarian dimensions. In the view of the Netherlands delegation, the attention of the multilateral arms control community is warranted. We are all aware of recent initiatives, expressed in resolutions during the forty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly last year. Now the CD is seized of this issue, as is the United Nations Secretary-General's Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. There is, however, a slight danger that the well-intended efforts might slightly suffer from fragmentation and lack of focus. Without prejudice to the ultimate forum to be chosen, what the Ad Hoc Committee can do at least is work towards a consensus view on the proper parameters for action.

The CD's mandate further includes the elaboration of practical means to increase openness and transparency related to weapons of mass destruction. Discussions in the CD on this contentious issue are still in a preliminary phase. It seems useful to make a distinction here between transfers on the one hand and holdings and procurement on the other. As to transfers, I underline that after the entry into force of the chemical weapons Convention - to be expected in about a year's time - there will exist a coherent interlocking network of international agreements prohibiting any transfer of any weapon of mass destruction. As for holdings and procurement of nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty recognizes the existence of five nuclear-weapon States. All other holdings and procurement of nuclear weapons is prohibited by international law. The Geneva Protocol, the chemical weapons Convention and the biological weapons Convention between them prohibit any design, possession, production and use of chemical and biological weapons respectively.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

Now, the basic assignment of the Conference on Disarmament seems to be to see to it that the transparency process would in due course yield comprehensive data and information on military outlays as well as on aggregate military force structures. This is certainly a long haul. It should not be forgotten, however, that a good deal of information on nuclear holdings is already in the public domain. For instance, the full texts of treaties like START and START II are issued as documents of the CD, and are thus widely disseminated. These texts provide information on the size of the nuclear arsenals of the two States concerned.

Important support for making progress is to be derived from the almost universal adherence to the NPT and the IAEA safeguards system. Regional arrangements, like the Euratom Treaty, and zones free of nuclear weapons or nuclear-free zones, such as the ones established by the recently reinforced Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty of Rarotonga, are further invaluable mechanisms conducive to a general environment of cooperative security and trust. The same holds true, mutatis mutandis, for the brand-new Convention on chemical weapons, with its innovative verification provisions.

It is now for us here in the Conference on Disarmament to capitalize further on what has already been achieved. As additional practical means to increase openness and transparency in nuclear matters, one could think of a confidence-building measure under which nuclear-weapon States might voluntarily supply more information on their nuclear arms holdings and the scale of the reductions of those holdings. A policy of transparency could also be developed with regard to plutonium stocks. This could ease the future elaboration of a "cut-off" treaty, which would definitely be another step along the way indicated in article VI of the NPT. Recommendations for advance notification of major military manoeuvres involving nuclear arms might be agreed upon here in the CD.

Resolution 46/36 L further requests the CD to address the issue of transfers of high technology with military applications. While elaborating the practical means requested by the General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament may establish that export controls are a necessary complement to international agreements prohibiting transfers or the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction. States that do abide by the international commitments appertaining thereto have no reason to worry about export control regimes.

Allow me to sum up. I am convinced that the CD can develop valuable recommendations for concrete measures to increase openness and transparency, on the basis of the above-mentioned and other, additional, proposals. It is a "family of efforts" which contributes to the success of the transparency in armaments' exercise now an object of consensus. These efforts are intended to encourage responsibility and self-restraint. The overall objective is cooperative security. In this way disarmament and international security are truly approached in an integrated manner. At the national level, the prospect is held out of reallocation of scarce socio-economic resources, without detriment to the security of member States. And it is in a secure environment that investment flourishes.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

There are meaningful patterns of action which the CD and its Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments can develop to further transparency with regard to holdings and procurement through national production. Furthermore, in extending, in a tangible fashion, the transparency concept to the development of parallel measures, both in the domain of weapons of mass destruction and with regard to transfers of high technology with military applications, the CD will be executing the mandate entrusted to it by the United Nations General Assembly to the full. Thus conceived and perceived, the transparency drive, and - for that matter - the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as an integral part of it, will come to fruition. In short, the CD can achieve much for the security of us all.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his wide-ranging statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada, Ambassador Shannon.

Mr. SHANNON (Canada): Mr. President, I also wish to welcome you to the presidency of the Conference and to express my confidence that the CD will benefit greatly from your leadership. I would fully agree with you laudatory comments to your predecessor, Ambassador Errera. I think the Conference can be justifiably grateful to him for guiding it through the difficult first weeks of this year's session. I also want to join others in paying tribute to Ambassador O'Sullivan for his vital role in the Conference during his three years here, especially regarding the negotiations on the chemical weapons convention and his efforts leading up to the historic negotiations we are now beginning on a CTBT. Let me say that his intellectual capacities and devotion to progress on these and other important issues will be sorely missed.

I am taking the floor today to give a brief description of my approach to the consultations which I have been requested to carry out on "the most appropriate arrangement to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices". I also wish to give examples of the types of questions I will be asking delegations in the course of these consultations so they may reflect and consult with their authorities if necessary. Before I do so, I would like to thank all delegations for this honour which they have conferred upon me and my country; I shall make every possible effort to live up to your expectations.

As we all know, proposals for a cut-off convention have been made for at least two decades. These proposals were made to stop the ever-growing production of fissile material, thus stopping the potential to transform such material into nuclear explosive devices. Such a concept would contribute positively, in the minds of many, to nuclear disarmament. Others consider that these proposals are further building blocks towards the construction of a non-proliferation regime. These views have evolved over time and the geo-political changes of the 1990s have made it possible to achieve a political consensus on the need to negotiate a convention on what is known in this context as "cut-off".

(Mr. Shannon, Canada)

In spite of the complexity of the issues involved, and the different objectives that are undoubtedly sought by various States, it is certainly worth our while to try to find agreement as to how we should proceed. If we agree broadly on a common approach, we should take advantage of the new consensus as expressed at the last United Nations General Assembly to start negotiations on a convention on cut-off. Perhaps the best way of proceeding is to look for the forests before we look for the trees. By that I mean I propose to sketch out a series of categories and questions to try to begin to penetrate the issues involved. What follows is not intended to be an exhaustive listing; other questions will arise as we proceed. To that end, I would ask all delegations to apprise me of significant areas that have been omitted or that might benefit from further clarification.

The United Nations General Assembly resolution (48/75 L of 16 December 1993) recommended the negotiation of a cut-off treaty in the most appropriate international forum. Delegations will be asked their preferences on the most appropriate arrangement for such a negotiation, the forum and, assuming it takes place in the Conference on Disarmament, the mandate and timing for such a negotiation. I will also try to assess whether there is a need to improve our technical knowledge base, and, in that context, whether there is a requirement for an experts group. The United Nations General Assembly resolution also asked IAEA to provide assistance for the examination of verification arrangements as and when required, and I will be seeking views on this aspect as well. In addition, in order to have a framework for the possible negotiation of a cut-off convention, I plan to seek the views of delegations on some substantive issues of a treaty. To that end, I will seek comments on the scope, verification and structure (i.e. whether it would stand alone or be somehow linked to the International Atomic Energy Agency).

These are the main questions that come to my mind as I embark on this mission. I intend to consult with all delegations that wish to put their views forward on this important matter. For the time being I propose to proceed on a bilateral basis. Once I feel comfortable that most of the views have been aired, I will call meetings to share my preliminary conclusions and allow for a debate before drafting my report, which I understand I must give before the end of this session. I trust that I will find the support of all delegations for the approach sketched above.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador Shannon, for your report on where you stand with your consultations and on what you intend to do, and also for your kind words addressed to the Chair. I am sure that all members of the Conference will be supportive of your efforts and try their utmost to answer your pertinent and not impertinent questions.

This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none. Then let us continue as I had envisaged.

I would now like to invite the Conference to consider the requests for participation in our work from Ecuador and the former Yugoslav Republic of

(The President)

Macedonia. The secretariat has distributed today a note from the President containing these requests (CD/WP.453). During the consultations I have been holding, there has been no objection to these requests. In the circumstances, I propose that we adopt the recommendation contained in document CD/WP.453 directly in plenary, it being understood that this does not constitute a precedent for future occasions when an informal meeting might be necessary. May I take it that the Conference takes a decision to this effect? I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. ZEMSKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Before we take a decision on this matter, I would like to clarify under what name the Republic of Macedonia - this is the name under which Russia granted recognition - is prepared to join our Conference as an observer. Will it be ready to join as "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"? Have we clarified the position regarding this country?

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for this question. It is clear that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will take its place in this Conference under the name of "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". This is the United Nations practice that we will follow in the CD. Any further questions? If this is not the case, may I take it that we are all agreed?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I now turn to the informal paper circulated by the secretariat, containing the timetable of meetings to be held next week by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies. As usual, the timetable is merely indicative and may be changed, if necessary. On that understanding, I suggest that we adopt it.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: This concludes our work for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? If not, I intend to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 3 March 1994 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.